Nicaragua Closing Cuban Camps After Costa Rica Coup Plot

By Dan Kurzman
Washington Post Staff Writer

Cuban exile training camps in Nicaragua are being shut down in the wake of a scandal at an exile base in Costa Rica involving a plot to overthrow the Costa Rican government.

The camp in Costa Rica was ordered closed three weeks ago by authorities of that country. The elimination of the three bases that have been operating in Nicaragua is expected to signify an end to exile efforts to stage important commando raids on Cuba from Central American bases.

According to representatives of the Revolutionary Recovery Movement (MRR), which had operated the bases under the command of Manuel Artime, leader of the ill-fated Bay of Pigs expedition, the camps are being closed for strategic reasons.

"The commando approach, it is clear, cannot overthrow Fidel Castro," a spokesman said. "We will henceforth devote ourselves to underground activities inside Cuba."

However, diplomats here speculate that the main factor in the shutdown was a decision of the United States to cut off funds to the MRR as the result of the Costa Rican scandal. Costa Ricans are understood to believe that the Central Intelligence Agency has supported the anti-Castro training activities and therefore should have prevented the exiles from plotting against the Costa Rican government.

The apparent severance of U.S. funds is expected to prevent what might have been a serious deterioration in relations between the two countries.

Reports from Costa Rica indicate that local rightists had been trained and armed at a Cuban exile camp in preparation for a coup in which government leaders were to be assassinated and replaced by a neo-Nazi dictatorship.

The exiles are believed to have been motivated in part by the government's discovery of a liquor smuggling consipracy in which planes from Panama allegedly unloaded their illegal cargoes in the camp. The MRR has denied exile involvement.

The local rightists are also believed to have had promises of arms from Dominican Republic military officers who had lost their jobs in the Dominican government, which was not involved. The rightist plotters are understood to have solicited aid from Nicaraguan authorities as well.

Asie from the coup and liquor scandals, the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the training groups are believed to be contributing factors in the shutdown. They have been accused of recklessness in their tactics. Their prestige plummeted to a new low after the reported capture of two MRR agents in Cuba early last month. The agents apparently kept few secrets from the Castro regime.

Critisism has also been leveled at Kangaroo Court trials that have reportedly been held in the camps for individuals charged with Castroite sympathies. At least one person has died mysteriously.

Mexico Hopes to Get Cattle Off Roads

MEXICO CITY, March 16 (UPI)—Mexico will make a sincere effort this year to eliminate a major traffic hazard by keeping livestock and most people off dark highways, the official Tourist Department announced today.

A spokesman for the Department said a chain-link fence will be strung along a 170-mile stretch of the highway from here to Acapulco. Farmers will be warned to wear white clothing when they drive stock on the highway at night.

The Department rejected a semi-serious proposal advanced by bus drivers, who urged that tail lights be hung on donkeys and that farmers and cattle be sprayed with fluorescent paint.

THE WASHINGTON POST Wednesday, March 17, 1965 A 11